Investing in Tomorrow's Primary Care Leaders

TARGETED SCHOLARSHIPS IN THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT UAB

Mapping the future of primary care in Alabama

UAB SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Knowledge that will change your world
America needs more primary care providers. According to *The New York Times*, the United States is currently short approximately 9,000 primary care doctors—general internists, family doctors, geriatricians, and general pediatricians—and experts predict that the deficit will increase dramatically in the next 15 years. In order to meet the needs of an aging population, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) estimates the country will need 45,000 more primary care physicians by 2020.

For the School of Medicine at UAB, increasing the number of students who pursue a medical career in primary care has become a key component of its mission to serve the state. **Alabama, like the rest of the country, cannot provide adequate primary care to its citizens because it simply doesn’t have enough primary care physicians.** In 2012, the state had 3,512 active primary care physicians for a rate of 72.8 per 100,000 people, ranking it 45th in the nation according to the AAMC. The shortage is even greater in rural areas (55 of Alabama’s 67 counties are considered rural, and eight Alabama counties have no hospital at all) and is predicted to become more acute as our aging population requires more health resources, scores of older physicians retire, and medical coverage expands under the Affordable Care Act.

“Because the vast majority of our state doesn’t have adequate primary care, people aren’t getting timely or preventive care. They end up in emergency rooms instead, they come in sicker, and they get hospitalized, all of which is very costly and preventable,” says T. Michael Harrington, M.D., chair of the UAB Department of Family and Community Medicine and immediate past-president of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama.
The growing shortage of primary care physicians in Alabama and other states has created a demand for new physicians. Now the challenge lies in building interest among medical students to enter the field.

“We are desperately short of primary care physicians right now, and we’re going to be short for years down the road,” says William A. Curry, M.D., FACP, associate dean for rural programs and primary care. “As a state medical school, UAB recognizes our responsibility to provide primary care physicians, just as we provide highly capable specialized physicians of all sorts.”

UAB’s effort includes the Dean’s **Primary Care Scholars Program, designed to spark interest in primary care as a career.** It is one of many solutions outlined in the school’s AMC21 primary care strategic plan, which builds upon UAB’s leadership in the field. (UAB’s primary care program rose to #17 on U.S. News & World Report’s 2015 list of America’s best graduate schools.)

“It’s designed to help build leadership in primary care among our medical students, and to help further the mission of providing primary care physicians in underserved areas,” says H. Hughes Evans, M.D., Ph.D., senior associate dean for medical education. “It’s a good way of combining interest in primary care with leadership development and service learning, and with scholarship opportunities to really cement students’ excitement.”

The Primary Care Scholars Program will enable students to learn more about the issues, advocacy, and leadership opportunities available in primary care. “We’re hoping to develop longitudinal continuity care experiences for the students,” Evans says. “Those students would eventually engage in a follow-up panel of patients with a primary care doctor in the vicinity, so they can really start to understand the pleasures and joys of taking care of patients over time.”

The curriculum will cover topics including population-based care; quality measurement and management; and health economics, law, and policy. Earl Salser Jr., M.D., UAB associate professor in family and community medicine, serves as the program’s medical director.

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**Primary Care Scholars Quick Facts**

- Encourages students to maintain interest in primary care throughout medical school
- Merit-based program providing annual scholarships of $10,000, mentoring, career modeling, and leadership and service learning opportunities
- Each year, two Primary Care Scholars are chosen from each of UAB’s regional campuses and the main Birmingham campus
The average medical student graduates with $180,000 in debt.

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<tr>
<th>Medical School Tuition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$29,000 per year [In-State]</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>*average tuition and fees</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$64,000 per year [Out-of-State]</strong></td>
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<td>*average tuition</td>
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UAB’s primary care program rose to **#17** on *U.S. News & World Report’s* 2015 list of America’s best graduate schools.

62 of Alabama’s 67 counties do not have enough primary care physicians to meet the needs of the population.

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

**3,512**

primary care physicians

**72.8 physicians**

PER

100,000 people

45th in the nation
The UAB School of Medicine is stepping in to help solve Alabama’s primary care crisis. According to Selwyn M. Vickers, M.D., FACS, senior vice president for medicine and dean of the School of Medicine, the Primary Care Scholars Program “represents an important component and priority of our primary care strategic plan and will have a major impact on health-care delivery throughout Alabama.”

We are seeking visionary philanthropic partners to help us in our effort to recruit and retain promising young medical students for the Primary Care Scholars Program by providing scholarships to help ease their debt burden.

The increasing cost of providing our best and brightest students with a top-caliber medical education means tuition can become a major burden. This debt load—averaging $180,000 for graduating medical students—not only can make the medical school years difficult, but can influence a student’s choice of the medicine he or she will practice. A young person who feels called to primary care may nevertheless choose a specialty in which the pay is higher when faced with mounting student debt, thus contributing to the already critical shortage of primary care physicians across Alabama.

Your support through scholarship contributions can have a positive impact on the future of these promising medical students and on the quality of health care throughout the state for generations to come. With your help, even more talented students can realize their dreams by focusing on their training rather than on their student debt.

Doctors tend to practice where they train:
- 44 percent of UAB medical students stay in Alabama for their residencies
- 57 percent of graduates from regional campuses stay in Alabama to practice
- 30 percent of graduates from regional campuses practice primary care in the state

UAB’s Regional Medical Campuses

Regional medical campuses are a key aspect of UAB’s overall primary care strategy. A new campus in Montgomery welcomed its first third-year medical students in 2014, joining our existing regional campuses in Huntsville and Tuscaloosa. Each year, two Primary Care Scholars are chosen for each regional campus and the main campus in Birmingham.

Regional campuses were created in large part to meet the need for more primary care physicians in Alabama, and it’s working—52 percent of graduates of the Huntsville and Tuscaloosa campuses enter primary care, and almost 40 percent of family physicians in Alabama trained at the Huntsville and Tuscaloosa campuses.

“Studies of regional campuses show that they do a better job of preparing primary care physicians, especially family medicine and internal medicine physicians,” says Robert M. Centor, M.D., FACP, regional dean and professor of medicine at the Huntsville Regional Campus.

“A greater preponderance of students who train at regional campuses choose primary care specialties,” says Wickliffe J. Many, M.D., regional dean of the Montgomery Regional Campus.

“For more than 40 years, UA’s College of Community Health Sciences, which also serves as the Tuscaloosa Regional Campus of the School of Medicine, has been dedicated to addressing the primary care workforce needs of the state,” says Richard H. Streiffer, M.D., regional dean of the Tuscaloosa Regional Campus. “That was the reason we were created, and it remains a primary motivation today.”
SCHOLARSHIP TYPES

There are three main types of scholarships:

- **Endowed Scholarships** - exist in perpetuity; funds are invested and a portion of earnings is used to fund an annual award.

  The minimum threshold needed to endow a scholarship at UAB is **$25,000**, which can be made as a single gift or several combined gifts, as a pledge of up to five years, or as a part of an estate plan. The funds are professionally invested through the University of Alabama Pooled Endowment Fund, and a portion of the income is made available to fund the scholarship according to a spending rate—typically 5 percent—established and annually reviewed by the University of Alabama Board of Trustees. Annual reports are issued on the endowment status.

  An endowed scholarship at the $25,000 level generally produces $1,250 in scholarship dollars to be awarded, which currently pays for about 5 percent of one student's in-state tuition. Though any support is appreciated, the School of Medicine's ultimate goal is to have scholarship endowments funded at higher levels.

  When the minimum threshold of $25,000 is received for an endowed scholarship, a resolution formally establishing the scholarship is sent to the University of Alabama Board of Trustees for approval. Additional gifts can be made to the scholarship in the future, creating further opportunities for deserving students.

- **Sponsored Scholarships** - current-use funds are spent outright each year to support a student.

- **Combination Current-Use and Endowed Scholarships** - a portion of the gift is used to award a scholarship now and the remainder is used to establish or augment an endowed scholarship. For example, a donor wishing to establish an endowed scholarship of $100,000 might choose to give $25,000 each year for five years, with $20,000 used to build endowment and $5,000 awarded outright to a current student. This enables the donor to achieve the long-term goal and also enjoy the immediate rewards of supporting a student in the present.

**Double Your Impact**

Gifts from School of Medicine alumni to current-use scholarships will be matched dollar for dollar by the School up to $150,000 through September 30, 2015.
WAYS TO FUND SCHOLARSHIPS

Whether endowed, sponsored, or a combination of the two, scholarships can be funded in several ways, or through a combination of these methods:

- Gifts or pledges of cash (pledges can be spread over five years)
- Planned gifts offer significant tax and estate benefits to the donor and his or her heirs. They create a lasting impact after one’s lifetime and establish a legacy for the donor or donor’s loved one. Planned gift examples include:
  
  - Bequests ~ Beneficiary Designations (life insurance or retirement plan assets)
  - Charitable IRA Rollover ~ Appreciated Stocks/Securities ~ Donor Advised Funds
  - Charitable Gift Annuities ~ Charitable Lead Trusts/Charitable Remainder Trusts

Gifts are typically made directly to the School of Medicine. However, donors may choose to make their gifts through the University of Alabama Medical Alumni Association. If the gift is for endowment, or involves a charitable trust or gift annuity rather than a simple bequest, the SOM Development Office can assist in determining the best way to accomplish the donor’s goals. All gifts to School of Medicine scholarships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT CONSIDERATIONS

It is recommended that scholarship criteria for an endowment agreement be as flexible as possible to allow for maximum benefit to the greatest number of students, no matter the changes that may occur to tuition and program structure in the future. While final selection decisions are made by the School of Medicine Scholarship Committee, donors may express preference for how their scholarships will be used. Establishing preference is not required, as more students may benefit when criteria remain flexible.

Examples of recipient criteria considerations include:

- A donor may specify that the scholarship be either need- or merit-based, or may choose to leave that decision to the School of Medicine scholarship committee.
- A donor may wish to support students who plan to pursue primary care, keeping in mind that students often make that choice in their third or even fourth years of medical school.
- Some donors wish to give preference to students from a particular region of Alabama, or to those who are the first generation of their family to attend college or medical school.

Each time the scholarship is awarded, the donor or his or her designee will receive information about the student recipient’s progress toward the goal of a career in medicine. Additional gifts can be made to the scholarship at any time in the future, creating more opportunities for deserving students.
To learn more about scholarship giving options for the Primary Care Scholars Program, or if you would like to discuss the many ways you can give to support our students, please contact:

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“In primary care, you get to take care of the whole patient, you get to care for their families. A lot of chronic illnesses wouldn’t progress to needing a specialist if you can make an impact at the primary care level.”  
~ Primary Care Scholar Robyn Wilson, of Clay, Ala., pictured bottom right

The inaugural class of Primary Care Scholars with Medical Director of the Primary Care Scholars Program Earl Salser Jr., M.D. (top left).